

[Nurse's Story]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Clarence Weinstock

ADDRESS 43 Morton Street

DATE July 13, 1939

SUBJECT Nurse's Story

1. Date and time of interview
2. Place of interview New York Hospital
3. Name and address of informant
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

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NEW YORK

FORM C

TEXT OF INTERVIEW (UNEDITED)

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NAME OF WORKER Clarence Weinstock

ADDRESS 43 Morton Street

DATE July 13, 1939

SUBJECT Nurse's Story

["THE SCRUBWOMAN"?]

When we were still trying to organize on an industrial basis I went to make a speech in one of the smaller hospitals. About twenty people were at the meeting, the highest in rank was a male nurse. I had to think of how I could make them realize how important and necessary they were to the hospital. So I said, "Who is the most important person here? Is it the doctor who performs the operation? Well, the operating room is on the tenth floor and the patient is on the second. How does he get upstairs? By the elevator which you operate." And I pointed to the elevator man. "Well, perhaps the nurses can operate an elevator sometimes, but not all the time, so you see how necessary John is. And then supposing there were no laundry workers, think of how many patients would die because of the dirty linen. And if the steam workers were not on the job, how could the instruments be clean enough to do their work? So I really can't tell you who is most important in a hospital. I really don't know, but I think that everyone is."

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Then a little scrubwoman got up, a little woman so plain and homely she could just never help to organize anything. She said, "Brothers and sisters, many times the nurses say hard things to me and it hurts, but do you think I get angry? Nobody who works can ever hurt me. They are mad because there is no union here and they don't know the reason. Brothers and sisters, a hospital without a union is like a man without a heart, like the sky without the moon, like summer without leaves and flowers. Brothers and sisters, you can't live properly without we have a union." Then she stopped, but those people knew that there was nothing more that she had to say, what she had said was enough. They all joined up. That was one of our best locals.